

**CARYOCOLUM JUNCTELLA (DOUGLAS) (LEP.: GELECHIIDAE)
IN WORCESTERSHIRE (VC37) IN 1994**

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ON 27 APRIL 1994 I went to the Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve with Dr M.W. Harper. Whilst searching a woodside meadow at about 17.00hrs MWH caught a small moth flying actively in the warm spring evening at waist height. We were surprised to find it was a *Caryocolum* species. Shortly after this I caught another flying past at shoulder level. Both were found to be slightly worn females of what we realised must be *C. junctella* (Douglas) as this is the only one of its genus which hibernates as an imago. This was confirmed later by reference to description in Meyrick ([1928]) and by dissection of genitalia.

I am not aware of any previous record of this species in VC37 although Wood (1908) recorded it from "Tarrington and Woolhope District" (VC36 Herefordshire). Otherwise old records are from northern and western Britain from Cheshire to Inverness apart from two sites in Essex during the last century and one site in Northamptonshire in 1907 (Parsons, 1995). All, however, are from long ago and the only other recent record quoted by Parsons (*op. cit.*) is from VC51 (Flintshire) by H. Michaelis on 16.viii.1992. Also, there do not seem to be any descriptions of its life history from the British Isles.

Accordingly MWH and I returned to the site on 21.v.1994 to try to discover larvae. This is a very herb-rich unimproved meadow surrounded by the oak woodland of the Wyre Forest. We assumed the insect most likely was feeding on a species of Stitchwort or some other species of the Caryophyllaceae, like the others in its genus. The meadow contains some large anthills on which were growing *Stellaria graminea* L. and a few plants of *Cerastium glomeratum* Thuill. We quickly began to find small larvae mining the leaves and spinning together the tips of the shoots of the *Stellaria*. MWH also found a lepidopteran larva mining a leaf of the *Cerastium*, though we found no others and it got mixed up with the *Stellaria* and so was not definitely bred out. The larvae fed up quite quickly and all had pupated in tissue at the bottom of their container by 10 June.

Larvae in final instar were 6mm long, head and prothoracic plate black, first thoracic segment brown with first pair of prothoracic legs blackish brown, and abdomen, anal plate and pinacula apple-green. I had six larvae and they all produced imagines of *junctella* between 6 and 11 July 1994. Another visit to the site in August did not reveal any fresh feeding, so it seems it is univoltine.

The meadow is well managed by seasonal grazing, mostly by cattle, but not from March to July which enables meadow invertebrates to flourish whilst maintaining the flora. This management seems entirely satisfactory as regards *junctella* and other insects present. Historically it seems it was

grazed by two cart horses until about twenty years ago and then for a few years by sheep, and since then only by four cows from late summer through the winter (apart from some deer and rabbits!).

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to English Nature and especially to warden John Robinson for permission to record microlepidoptera on the NNR and for their excellent management of the site.

References

- Huemer, P., 1993. The British species of *Caryocolum* Gregor & Povolný. *British Journal of Entomology & Natural History* 6: 145-157.
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- Parsons, M.S., 1995. *A review of the scarce and threatened ethmiine, stathmopodine and gelechiid moths of Great Britain*. JNCC.
- Wood, J.H., 1908. *Lepidoptera*. in Page, W. (Ed.). *The Victoria County History of Herefordshire*.

Stolen cabinet drawers

Your correspondent's loss (Brian Baker, *Ent. Rec.* 107: 259-260) was no surprise to me having had a similar experience at what was then the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland office at 71 Renfield Street, Glasgow, about 15 years ago. I write to express the opinion that such occurrences are more common than most people realise. Just as the consuming passion to collect birds' eggs lends individuals to contravene the law, so do less scrupulous entomologists stoop to illegal means of acquisition. Who else would have any interest in microlepidoptera?

Such details I have are from memory and the cabinet carcass and remaining drawers which are still in our possession here. No publicity was given to the theft at the time, as it was thought that the culprit was known. However, despite a police investigation, nothing was recovered.

The publicising of details of such losses is one of the ways they can be combated. The entomological fraternity is a relatively small one and it should be possible to recover at least some of the more distinctive property eventually.

Our own loss was from a vintage cabinet containing two stacks of ten drawers behind two glass-panelled doors. The entomological interest of the contents was minor, mostly macroleps, acquired in the course of other work. I do not know the maker; their dimensions are 17" x 15". Replacements were made but, excellent as they are, do not quite match, as the originals have cast brass label holders. The replacements have stampings.

As a diver and sailing man, I have had to contend with thefts of demand valves, cylinders and outboard engines. These all have serial numbers, but much entomological material is just as traceable through data labels. Keep up the good work!— P.R. SHAVE, Scottish Agricultural Science Agency, East Craigs, Edinburgh EH12 8NJ.